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Applicants cancel claim 7, 19, and 25. Claim 1 and 13 have previously been canceled. Claims 2-6, 8-12, 14-18, 20-24, and 26-27 remain pending in the present application. Applicants amend claims 2 and 14 to incorporate the features of claims 7 and 19, respectively. Correspondingly, Applicants amend claims 26 and 27 to also incorporate the respective features of claims 7 and 19. Applicants amend claim 8, 11, 20, and 23 for proper dependency. No new matter has been added.

Applicants acknowledge with appreciation the Examiner's finding that claims 7-11, 19-23, and 25 contain allowable subject matter. Applicants cancel claims 7 and 19 and incorporate their features to their respective base claims 2 and 14. Correspondingly, Applicants amend claims 8 and 11 to depend from claim 2, and amend claims 20 and 23 to depend from claim 14. And since claim 24—dependent from claims 14-16—recites features that correspond to those of claim 25, Applicants cancel claim 25 as being redundant. In addition, Applicants amend claims 26 and 27 to incorporate the respective features of claims 7 and 19. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner allow claims 2-6, 8-12, 14-18, 20-24, and 26-27.

Claims 2-6, 12, 14-18, 24, 26 and 27 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,501,804 to Rudolph et al. in view of U.S. Patent 6,215,798 to Carneheim et al. Again, Applicants amend base claims 2 and 14 to incorporate the respective features of claims 7 and 19, which the Examiner has deemed to contain allowable subject matter. Applicants, therefore, respectfully submit that claims 2 and 14, together with claims 3-6, 8-12, 15-18, and 20-24 dependent therefrom, respectively, are patentable over the cited references for at least this reason. Claims 26 and 27 also incorporate the respective features of claims 7 and 19, and are, therefore, patentable over the cited references for at least the same reason.

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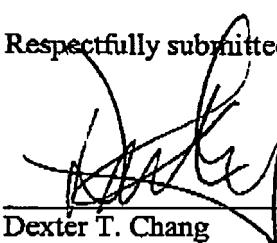
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Applicants appreciate the Examiner's implicit finding that the additional reference made of record, but not applied, does not render the claims of the present application unpatentable, whether this reference is considered alone or in combination with others.

In view of the remarks set forth above, this application is in condition for allowance which action is respectfully requested. However, if for any reason the Examiner should consider this application not to be in condition for allowance, the Examiner is respectfully requested to telephone the undersigned attorney at the number listed below prior to issuing a further Action.

Any fee due with this paper may be charged to Deposit Account No. 50-1290.

Respectfully submitted,



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